OTOMEZA, SPICA, SHINJUBOSHI

by

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Story 4:
Umineko no Soup

海猫（ウミネコ）のスープ

Seagull Soup

HIROFUMI ALWAYS, ALWAYS FED HIS LEFTOVER BREAD TO THE SEAGULLS.

I'M HUNGRY.
drool
HIROFUMI.
LET ME HAVE SOME!
NOT YOU AGAIN,
sigh
NAMI.

hmph
WHAT A PIG.
I GET HUNGRY WHEN I SEE YOU.
DROOL
JUST SO YOU KNOW, HATOKO'S CAKES ARE WAITING FOR US BACK HOME. PLENTY OF THEM.
YOU'D BETTER NOT STUFF YOURSELF WITH OTHER FOOD.
That's why I didn't finish my lunch.
Really?!
'COURSE I'LL EAT HER CAKES, BUT...
I can stuff 'em all in!
chomp
AAAH!
OWW!
DON'T BITE ME, IDIOT!

I THINK THAT WAS OUR FIRST KISS.
THOUGH, HIROFUMI SNUBS ME...
EVERY TIME I BRING THAT UP.
Maybe he's just shy
...
HMM-MM.
YOU'RE IN FOR A FANCY, SUGARY TREAT TODAY.
I went crazy on the decorations
HATOKO! DO NOT IGNORE ME!

I GET TO CALL HIM THAT BECAUSE I'M HIS SISTER.
AND FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, GET OVER HIM!
NO, WE DIDN'T— AND DON'T CALL HIM FATSO!
FIRST KISS? YOU MEAN, YOU AND FATSO HAD ANOTHER GO?
HE'S YOUR BROTHER!
Huh.
Pout
HE'S IN SOME COLLEGE IN TOKYO, MILES AWAY.
HE HAS A GIRLFRIEND. HE'S ANTI-SOCIAL. HE'S FAT.
HE HAS ZERO GOOD POINTS.
HE HAS TO HAVE SOME ...
TO LAND HIMSELF A GIRL-FRIEND.
I thought I had no competition
WELL, AREN'T YOU A GLUTTON FOR PUNISH-MENT.
IT DOESN'T MATTER EITHER WAY.
HIROFUMI AND I WILL BE TOGETHER IN THE END. YOU'LL SEE!
WE'RE ONLY HALFWAY THERE.

Cuteness!
TODAY I WENT ALL OUT ON DECORATING THEM.
whoa
AWESOME.
YOU'RE A PRO, HATOKO.
They look delish.
HEY, GUYS. HOW ABOUT SOME CUPCAKES?
ONCE I'M ALL GROWN UP (ALMOST THERE) HE'LL—
ignore
UNFORTUNATELY...
SORRY, NOT TODAY. MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME?
Can I take pics, though? They're too cute
YOU DON'T LIKE BUTTER CREAM?
THEY'RE GOOD. TRUST ME.
THE THING IS, WE'RE ON A DIET.

THIS TIME, WE WILL REACH OUR GOAL!
Lose those five kilos!
WE'LL UNZIP OUR BACKS AND SHED OUR FLABBY SKIN!
VOILÀ! WE'LL EMERGE AS METAPHORICAL BUTTERFLIES!
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TWO ARE FAT.
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
I WANT TO CHANGE.
IF I LOSE THE FIVE KILOS, I CAN WEAR THAT OUTFIT.
PLUS, NO MORE WORRYING ABOUT HAVING CHUBBY CHEEKS.
AND MAYBE HIRAKAWA, THIS GUY AT MY WORKPLACE,
WILL SEE ME IN A NEW LIGHT.
I SEE.

I WANT TO GO ON A DIET, TOO!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT, NAMI.
You love food way too much.
B—
BUT THE NEXT TIME WE MEET,
AND HIROFUMI SEES JUST HOW MUCH I'VE CHANGED, HE'LL PROBABLY BE NICER TO ME!
THAT REMINDS ME.
HE'S COMING HOME TOMORROW TO HOUSE-SIT WITH ME.
OUR PARENTS ARE GOING OFF ON A LONG VACATION.
TOO BAD.
IT'S TOO SOON FOR YOUR BIG CHANGE. GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGET—
I'll crash at your place!
WE CAN HAVE, LIKE, OUR OWN WEIGHT LOSS CAMP!

COME ON.
I HAVE TO ADMIT...
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE NOT INTRIGUED IN THE LEAST.
THE IDEA OF A WORLD-FAMOUS FAT PÂTISSIÈRE IN THE MAKING ISN'T VERY APPEALING.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT TO EAT ON A DIET, THOUGH?
I've never been on one.
WELL, I CAN TELL YOU WHAT'S FATTENING.
Butter! Lots of butter
KIHARA SAYS SHE HAS KONJAC.
SHE TRIED OUT THE BANANA DIET BUT ENDED UP EATING WHOLE BUNCHES. BANANAS ARE JUST THAT GOOD.
THEY SAY A LOW-CARB DIET GIVES YOU HEADACHES.
WOULDN'T WANT THAT.
I WISH I COULD EAT ANYTHING AND STILL BE SLIM.

An na na!
GETTING HUNGRY BECAUSE WE WERE TALKING FOOD? YOU'RE HOPELESS.
I'M STARVING.
HMM?

ALL THAT TIME HE WAS AWAY, HIROFUMI BECAME A WHOLE NOTHER GUY!
HIRO?!
Say what?!
SO I DIDN'T FINISH MY BREAD.
I WAS HOPING TO EAT YOUR HOMEMADE CAKES, HATOKO,
BUMMER.
I WASN'T EXPECTING TO SEE YOU. I REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN THE SEAGULLS ALL OF MY LEFTOVERS.
BUT, NAMI...
Jump
Y-
YES?!

HOW YOU MANAGED TO LOSE ALL THAT WEIGHT!
WHAT I'M DYING TO KNOW IS...
My e-mail address? Why would I give it to you?
I'd rather throw 'em away than give 'em to you!
Meanie!
Hirofumi~ here's your chocolate!
Hmph
No, thanks. Hatoko made plenty.

I LOST WEIGHT BEFORE I KNEW IT.
HOW? NO CLUE.

FOR NAMI, TOO?
FIX THAT SOUP FOR ME AND NAMI WHILE YOU'RE HERE!
THAT'S IT!
OH.
I THINK IT'S THE SOUP I HAVE ON A DAILY BASIS.

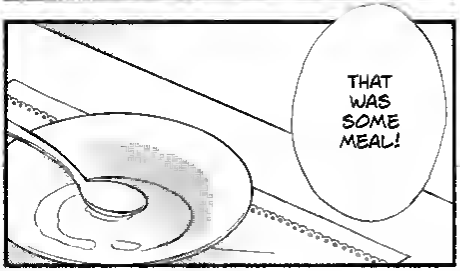
SURE.
glug
glug
YEAH, WELL...
GET SERIOUS, NAMI!

YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND, HATOKO!
He dotes on you!
HUH?
OH, YEAH?
AND HE'S BEING A REAL SWEET-HEART!
Not that he wasn't hot before
I CAN'T BELIEVE HIROFUMI GOT HOT!
WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR WEIGHT LOSS CAM-PAIGN?
DONE!

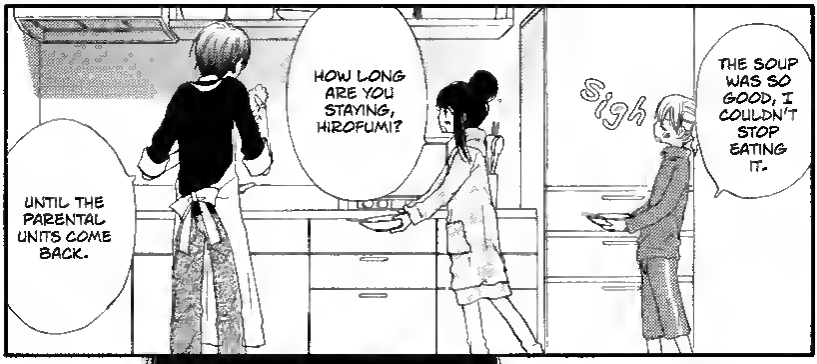
HOW'S IT TASTE?
IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR AVERAGE VEGGIE SOUP.
SO THIS IS THE SECRET SOUP OF TRANSFOR-MATION.
Gulp

YUMMY.
OOH.
SEAGULL.
WHAT STOCK DID YOU USE?
CHICKEN?
AH.
=pfft=

DON'T SCARE US LIKE THAT!
Jeez!
...
I WAS HEARING THINGS.


THAT WAS SOME MEAL!

'COURSE NOT!
I WAS KIDDING.


UNTIL THE PARENTAL UNITS COME BACK.
HOW LONG ARE YOU STAYING, HIROFUMI?
Sigh
THE SOUP WAS SO GOOD, I COULDN'T STOP EATING IT.

THAT'S A WEEK FROM NOW.

BY THE END OF THE WEEK,
I'LL BE A NEW PERSON!
MAYBE IF I LOSE WEIGHT, I CAN
LOSING WEIGHT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.
YOU'VE SEEN HIROFUMI.
FINALLY! THAT'S THE SPIRIT, GIRL!
NIGHT.

WHERE AM—
HIROFU—

creak
JUST A DREAM.
gasp
HEY.
YOU'RE STILL UP?
gurgle gurgle
oh!
UM...
I CAME TO GET A GLASS OF WATER.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
FIXING SOUP FOR BREAKFAST.
YOU GET HUNGRY THE MINUTE YOU WAKE UP, RIGHT?
ACTUAL-LY,
I'M HUNGRY RIGHT NOW.
YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD THAT EFFECT ON ME.
HEY, DON'T BLAME ME.
drool
HERE.
JUST A SMALL BOWL.
'Cause you're going back to sleep

MADE ME ALL THE MORE HUNGRY.
WHAT LITTLE SOUP I HAD, STANDING IN THE KITCHEN,
SORRY YOU HAD TO CARRY SOME.
IT'S OK.
THIS COUNTS AS WORKING OUT.
RIGHT. YOU'RE TRYING TO LOSE WEIGHT.

BUT ---
I WANT TO CHANGE.
NOT THAT YOU NEED TO LOSE ANY.
CHANGE?
WEIGHT LOSS DOES THAT TO A PERSON?!
That's what Kimura said to us
LOSING WEIGHT IS LIKE PULLING THE METAPHORICAL ZIPPER DOWN YOUR BACK AND STEPPING OUT AS A BRAND-NEW PERSON, RIGHT?
IF THERE REALLY HAD BEEN A DIFFERENT ME UNDERNEATH THAT ZIPPER, WHO TOOK OVER WHEN I LOST WEIGHT,
HE WOULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.
BUT,
WELL,

I JUST WISH I HAD KNOWN BETTER. PREFERABLY SOONER. BEFORE SHE DUMPED ME.
HIS GIRLFRIEND DUMPED HIM, HUH?
THERE'S YOUR CHANCE.
Sweet Treats
For Cooking Pros
SOME SWEET, COMFORTING WORDS WOULD HAVE DONE THE TRICK.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO HIM!
SO MUCH FOR THAT!
swing
swing
swing
REJECTION IS A SORE SUBJECT. JUST BE CONSIDERATE, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

Mm?
WAIT A MINUTE.
HATOKO ---
DID HIROFUMI REJECT ME?
DUH?
LIKE, A HUNDRED TIMES OVER?

IS THAT WHY HE'S BEING SO... CONSIDERATE?
WHAT'S WRONG?
DOES IT TASTE BAD?
drag
NO...
IT'S GOOD, VERY GOOD ...
So!
TELL ME!

SOUPS WERE MY EX'S SPECIALTY.
DID YOU GET SOMEONE TO TEACH YOU...
HOW TO MAKE THIS WONDERFUL SOUP?
I mean, you never helped around the house.
I DID.
I NEVER COMPLIMENTED HER ON HER SOUPS, AND SHE WAS DETERMINED TO CHANGE THAT.
SHE KEPT MAKING THEM, DAY AFTER DAY, TO THE POINT THAT I KNEW THE STEPS BY HEART.
I LOVED HER SOUPS, BUT I WASN'T ABOUT TO ADMIT THAT TO HER. IT WASN'T LIKE ME.
Hey!
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT, YOU KNOW.
Be honest about these things
I KNOW.
SHE TOLD ME SHE'D FOUND ANOTHER GUY.

SAID HE WAS A BETTER GUY THAN I COULD EVER HOPE TO BE.
HIROFUMI'S BACK ZIPPER WAS OPEN, AND SEAGULLS CAME RUSHING OUT.
THEY WERE MADE INTO A SOUP, WHICH I ATE.

BUT NO MATTER HOW MUCH I ATE, I WAS STILL HUNGRY.
I FEEL SICK.
I HAVE THIS URGE TO BAKE RIGHT AWAY!
I SEE CHANGES IN ME!
glint
pant Pant
YOU'RE REGRESSING!
I want to knead. I like double-boiling but should I leave the butter at room temperature?
HEY, HATOKO.
DO YOU SEE ANY CHANGES IN ME?
I've been eating lots of sweets
YOU ATE TOO MUCH.
YOU KNOW WHY.
belch
EXCUSE ME!
I HAVE SOME SHOPPING TO DO!
Sneak
What?!

creak
HATOKO WENT OUT?
Ah.
I THOUGHT IT WAS ABOUT TIME SHE CAVED IN.
YEAH.
SHE NEEDED SOME BAKING INGREDIENTS.
WOULD IT KILL HER NOT TO BAKE FOR ONCE?
THAT HATOKO ...

LET'S FACE IT—IT'S PRACTICALLY A MIRACLE ...
THAT WE HELD OUT THIS LONG ...
IN THIS HOUSE WITHOUT EATING THE STUFF SHE BAKES.

...
MAYBE... THE REAL REASON...
YOU GOT THINNER IS BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T GET TO EAT HATOKO'S SWEETS?
HMM?
YEAH, COULD BE.

WHAT?!
THE SOUP DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT?!
I NEVER SAID IT DID.
BUT I ATE BUCKET-LOADS OF THAT SOUP!
DIDN'T HURT, DID IT?
WITH ALL THE MEAT AND VEGETABLES IN IT, IT MAKES A WHOLESOME SERVING.
Evil!
hehheh.
I'M DOING YOU A BIG FAVOR. AREN'T I NICE?
Idiot.
Always put health first!
...
WHAT'S WRONG?

IF I WAS DIFFERENT,
YOU'D TREAT ME MORE NICELY, RIGHT?
HERE'S THE THING.
I WANTED TO CHANGE.
NOT NICE ENOUGH TO YOU?
I'M...
I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE NICE TO ME JUST BECAUSE YOUR GIRL-FRIEND LEFT YOU.

Tra la la la li la~♪
I...
HATOKO JUST TEXTED ME.
"COME PICK ME UP. THERE'S TOO MUCH FOR ME TO CARRY ON MY OWN,"
SHE SAID.
JUST HOW MUCH IS SHE PLANNING TO MAKE?
Man.
TODAY ...
WE ARE SO GOING TO BINGE ON HATOKO'S CAKES.
NAMI...

...DO YOU THINK I SHOULD HAVE STAYED THE SAME?
GIVE ME...
YOUR HAND.
lick

SAME OLD.
WHAT ARE YOU—
What the—
YOUR TASTE,
THAT IS.
yank
I'M NOT YOUR FOOD!

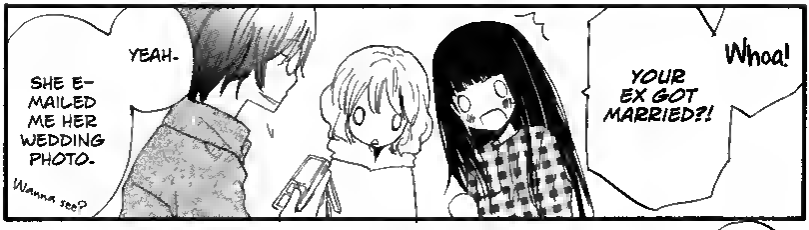
ugh.
NOW I'M SERIOUSLY STARVING.
drool
AFTER SNARFING DOWN ALL THAT SOUP?
YOU HAVE A BOTTOM-LESS PIT FOR A STOMACH.
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED ONE BIT, NAMI.
I THINK I HAVE.

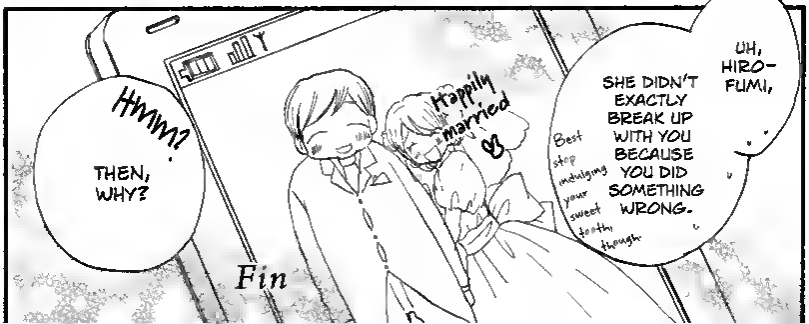
'CAUSE YOUR FINGER NO LONGER CUTS IT FOR ME.

duck
Oops!
SORRY!
Do I look like Sorry?

blush
WAS...
WAS THAT GOOD ENOUGH?
turn

...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
LOOKING FOR YOUR BACK ZIPPER!


Whoa!
YOUR EX GOT MARRIED?!
YEAH.
SHE E-MAILED ME HER WEDDING PHOTO.
Wanna see?


UH, HIRO-FUMI,
SHE DIDN'T EXACTLY BREAK UP WITH YOU BECAUSE YOU DID SOMETHING WRONG.
Best stop indulging your sweet dreams though.
Happily married
HMMM?
THEN, WHY?
Fin